

# AUNT CHLOE

AUGUST 23, 2019

## 2 poems

*by Kimberly A. Collins*

### **Elisheba**

An oath pledged to God.

She blinks as a nectarine sun slices dawn

leaning into shade against a baobab tree.

She's a tiny thing. Her breasts have not begun to bud;

onyx eyes sparkle as giraffes give awkward glide

zebras prance in praise. She is safe/           Winds shift.

Blades of grass wriggle between her toes.

She doesn't notice the animals halt/           away from the open plain.

Too late. Her feet bolted. Hands tied to splintered bark.

She struggles. Dankness robs her day/           Feces/

urine/ supplant smells of her mother's peanut stew

left burning on an open flame.

She is Elisheba, a scattered prayer.

## Flying African

*If I can create the minimum of my plans and desires  
there shall be no regrets. —Bessie Coleman*

And even though he said *you nigger women ain't never gonna fly*

I sprung free to test my wings.

And even though I thought I could stay snuggled in Jenny's pit, I wasn't scared  
to spit sky.

And even though there were no attached strings, I was in awe  
flipping wind, diving clouds.

And even though they came to witness my 351st solo flight, my performance  
left them crying wanting more.

And even though my bones lay mangled in crumbled dust,  
their weight released let me soar.

And even though they mourned my downed flight, they could not know  
this lil' lemon gal was one of them Africans who could fly.

**Kimberly A. Collins** gave voice to the movement against domestic violence with her poem, "Remember My Name," which has become a staple of Domestic Violence Awareness Month observances. She has facilitated writing-for-healing workshops for almost 30 years. Her work has been published in numerous journals and anthologies, and in the books, *Choose You! Wednesday Wisdom to Wake Your Soul* (based on a weekly blog) and *Bessie's Resurrection* (a collection of poems). She attended Spelman College and holds a BA from Trinity University, an MFA from Spalding University, and an MA in American and African American Literature from Howard University. She teaches English and Creative Writing at Morgan State University.

"Elisheba" and "Flying African" from *Bessie's Resurrection*. © 2019 Kimberly A. Collins. Reprinted with permission of the author. All rights reserved.